

Marian J. Sena at Research Foundation of the City University of New York– Hostos Community College Allied Health Career Pipeline Program

Marian Sena, a single mother of two young children, was facing eviction when she entered Hostos Community College's Allied Health Career Pipeline Program, a Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance. After coming to the United States from the Dominican Republic in 2003, she worked in a fast food restaurant. By 2011, she was employed as an administrative assistant, even though English is not her native language.

Seeking a way to improve her circumstances, Marian enrolled in and successfully completed Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training with the Allied Health Career Pipeline Program. Finding herself in a tough financial situation, she was given a referral to one of the Pipeline Program's partners, Start Small Think Big, for financial counseling and advisement.

At the end of the training, Marian told the case manager that her housing was in jeopardy. With rent in arrears, she was required to pay the entire sum in 30 days or face eviction. She applied for assistance; however, the amount awarded her was not sufficient to cover the rental arrears. As a result, the career services team began to work diligently to secure employment for Marian. She interviewed at Lincoln Hospital, one of the program's employer partners, for a sitter's position and was hired.

After only one month in the sitter's position, Marian was promoted to Patient Care Technician (PCT), which increased her salary by more than 60 percent. Her housing situation has since stabilized, and she has set a long-term goal of becoming a Registered Nurse.

Rosario at Hostos Community College Allied Health Career Pipeline Program

The Allied Health Career Pipeline Program at Hostos Community College is in the business of “transforming lives through allied healthcare,” providing low-income individuals and TANF recipients with training in allied health. Its students are at many different stations in their lives. Some have been demoralized by bureaucratic systems, dehumanized by small-minded individuals, or born and raised in disenfranchised despair without a sense of community. Others have been laid off by downsizing and sought to change career paths. Sadly, poverty offers dead-end solutions to discriminatory dilemmas.

At the core of this predicament lives Rosario Rivera, an amazing single mother of five children, four sons and a daughter. Her mantra is, simply, “Change is a good thing.”

Seeking change, Rosario went to the South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation, known as SoBRO, a community-based organization that offers programs in youth and adult education, career training and job placement, affordable housing development, business assistance and entrepreneurship, and commercial revitalization. There she completed TABE reading and math tests and learned that she might qualify for the Pipeline Program. As a Pipeline partner, SoBRO was able to refer Rosario with her test scores to the program’s intake coordinator for enrollment.

Between enrollment in the Certified Nursing Assistant course and clinical rotation, Rosario, a TANF recipient, faced a setback. Her living situation changed. She and her children moved from their home and neighborhood into a Brooklyn family shelter. She had to wake up at about 5:30 a.m. to ready her children and herself to commute to the Bronx for school.

Throughout the intensive CNA training, Rosario was steadfast and committed to achieving the change she wanted. She completed the training requirements, earned her New York State CNA credential, and was successfully placed in a six-week career-focused internship at Bronx-Lebanon Special Care Center. According to her site supervisor, she “followed directions and performed tasks without hesitation and with precision..., was a fast learner, [and] quickly learned the floor and residents.” She performed so well that the facility contacted the Pipeline Program to extend a job offer to Rosario for a CNA position.

Rosario is currently earning \$15.43 per hour at Bronx-Lebanon Special Care Center, where her “change is a good thing” mantra helps her continue to learn and grow.